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ABSTRACT

This guide describes the social services case management process in detail, focusing on some of the ways in which the basic process requirements can be met. An explanation of why each step in the process is necessary is offered from both a system and a client point of view. The guide is divided into seven chapters, each of which concentrates on one of the basic requirements of the case management process. The seven requirements examined are: (1) evaluation of service request or need, (2) eligibility determination, (3) planning of service objectives, (4) arrangements for linking client with service providers, (5) provision of services, (6) overseeing the case, and (7) recordkeeping. Each of these requirements is explained according to purpose, process and content with an emphasis on the activities and tasks which are thought to be most useful in maintaining a deliberate coordinating and organizing role at the individual case level. Techniques that are viewed as common to good practice are incorporated but not explored in detail. This guide is keyed to a series of videotapes intended for use in training social service workers in case management techniques. (JMB)

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THE CASE MANAGEMENT MODEL: IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

VOLUME II

1977

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CASE MANAGEMENT MODEL:
IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

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THE CASE MANAGEMENT MODEL: IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Introduction

Whereas Volume I introduces the case management model and briefly describes its process requirements, this volume is more detailed in its account of the process. It explains the process step-by-step, with emphasis on some of the ways in which the basic requirements can be met. It also explains why each step is necessary from both a system and a client point of view. Perhaps most importantly, Volume II is keyed to a series of video tapes which were produced in conjunction with the model's development. Depending on what training styles are preferred, these tapes may be used to introduce the case management concept or as a media supplement.

Ideally, much of the case management process will be self-explanatory, at least insofar as its basic reasoning and terminology are concerned. As explained elsewhere, there is nothing radically new about the process, except that various parts are identified and pieced together into what is hoped to be a helpful logic and sequence. In fact, throughout the manuals an acquaintance with the rationales and techniques employed to make the process workable is assumed.

The format of Volume II conforms to the seven basic requirements of the case management process. Various ways

for dealing with each step of the process, along with the reasoning behind them, are discussed. The emphasis is on the activities and tasks which are thought to be most useful in maintaining a deliberate coordinating and organizing role at the individual case level. Techniques that are viewed as common to good practice (e.g., interviewing) are incorporated, but not explored in detail.

One point to bear in mind is that the idea of case management is not to invent or impose a whole new system. Rather, the case management process is a way for organizing specific activities and tasks which may already exist or, alternatively, for introducing procedures where none is operative. This means that in most instances the implementation process will be one of joining and fitting together various parts of case management with existing system operations and/or requirements, including agency policies and procedures.

A related point: While each case management requirement is vital to the total process, their importance as an organizational force varies. For instance, while service provision is a process requirement, its activities and method are matters determined by state policy and procedures. For this reason, some case management process requirements receive less discussion or emphasis than others.

In the main, each of the seven requirements is explained according to purpose, process and content. For the most part

this pattern is followed throughout the manual. Due to special characteristics, however, some requirements (e.g., provision and overseeing) do not lend themselves to this format.

A final note should be added with regard to the objectives of case management. From a total service system perspective the objectives are numerous and of a multidimensional nature. Not only are there objectives for the overall delivery system, there are objectives relating to each service within the system. Likewise there are objectives based upon how the delivery system is organized.

Given these complexities, an effort has been made to define the objectives for this effort with a more narrow focus. That is to say, the focus in this volume and in Volume I, as well as the video tapes, is directed at the local agency staff. All things being equal what objectives seem relevant for the line agency staff utilizing the case management process? As such the objectives are simply identified as follows:

- To provide a core concept that standardizes and gives uniformity to the delivery of social services.
- To identify decision points in the management of service delivery.
- To identify staff development and training needs.

Hopefully, the content which follows will be understood and utilized with these objectives in mind.

CHAPTER I

Evaluation of the Service Request or Need

A. Purpose

The case management process represents a series of steps logically arranged to support decision making in the delivery of services. The process requires that the procedures associated with each step (or requirement) normally follow a defined sequence. There is a beginning point and an ending point, with several intermediate events in between. The first step--or the beginning point in the stepwise sequence--is defined as the evaluation of the service request or need.

If there is one over-all reason or purpose (desired outcome) for this step, it is to provide for the entry of individuals to a service resource when appropriate. The evaluation step is designed and so described in order to prevent the intake process from being endless or misdirected. The emphasis is on a decision, which results in either channeling the client into service assistance or directing him away (meaning that service delivery may be inappropriate or best provided elsewhere).

It is important to note two aspects of this step, namely "request" and "need." During the past few years publicly supported service agencies have moved more toward the provision

of services upon client request. The emphasis should remain there even though this has not been the case historically. Nor can it always be the case. Thus the inclusion of "need" in this step. There are human situations requiring intervention without a client request to do so (e.g., abuse and neglect).

The point of emphasis regarding the difference between a request and a need for services is to recognize the client's role in service delivery at the beginning. Services, staff time, agency resources, etc., probably are best utilized when client initiated. Though not always possible (e.g., protective service) the aim is that the case management process (a) encourage the client's self-determination regarding services and (b) make the evaluation step as much a joint process as possible, involving both client and agency.

The purpose of evaluation is dual in nature; as such it comprises access and screening components. Access is a key factor in the entire case management process. Is the agency "reachable"? Access is the entry point, as it were a doorway, through which the client can come. It implies an idea stated earlier, that of "client channeling" which hopefully is purposeful and has a well identified objective or reason for occurring. In simplest terms access makes possible an event that brings together a client and a staff member of a service agency at the same time and place.

Screening is the second factor in the purpose of evaluation. Once the access is assured and obtained the process moves further, again emphasizing a decision. Screening incorporates the decision concepts of screening "in" and screening "out." The determination of which of these issues applies is based upon two important elements, client eligibility and problem identification.

The consideration of client eligibility in this step is minimal, perhaps incidental. It is, in some ways, a reminder that certain requirements have to be met in order to provide service. As information is received at this stage of the process, the question might be posed "Does it appear that this person is eligible?" A final decision will occur if the screening process moves the client closer toward actual service delivery.

The second element involved in screening is the emphasis upon problem identification. This activity is oriented toward the identification of problems which are "presented" by the client. What kind of problems is the individual talking about? What is the situation today? This requires listening and observing, being as mindful and aware as possible of both internal and external factors influencing both the client and the service worker.

The emphasis on problem identification is not to encourage an elaborate diagnosis of the client's functioning. However, it does suggest that a skilled assessment of the client's overall present situation or condition is needed. The identification of problems is enhanced by listening. Clients by-and-large can identify and indicate what they need. If problems are to be defined, it is to be done from the client's viewpoint. As a rule, any exceptions to this approach ought to be minimal and well justified. An additional perspective to problem definition is the need to concentrate on "what" is happening rather than on efforts to determine "why" it is happening.

If the purpose of the evaluation of the service request or need is understood in the above framework, the result will provide consensus between the agency and the client regarding problems, and a beginning effort toward some kind of resolution can be made jointly. The decision will be made whether to "screen in" or to "screen out" the client. Screening in simply means that the evaluation to this point indicates the probable eligibility for service delivery and that such may occur. Screening out is the opposite idea; a decision can be made at this point and there is no further activity between the client and the agency. The validity of a decision to "screen in" or "screen out" a client is reinforced by the joint appraisal.

B. Process

The process of evaluating the service request or need involves three activities: (1) information gathering, (2) assessing the information and (3) sorting it out. The flow diagram (Figure 1) on the following page depicts the interconnections among these activities.

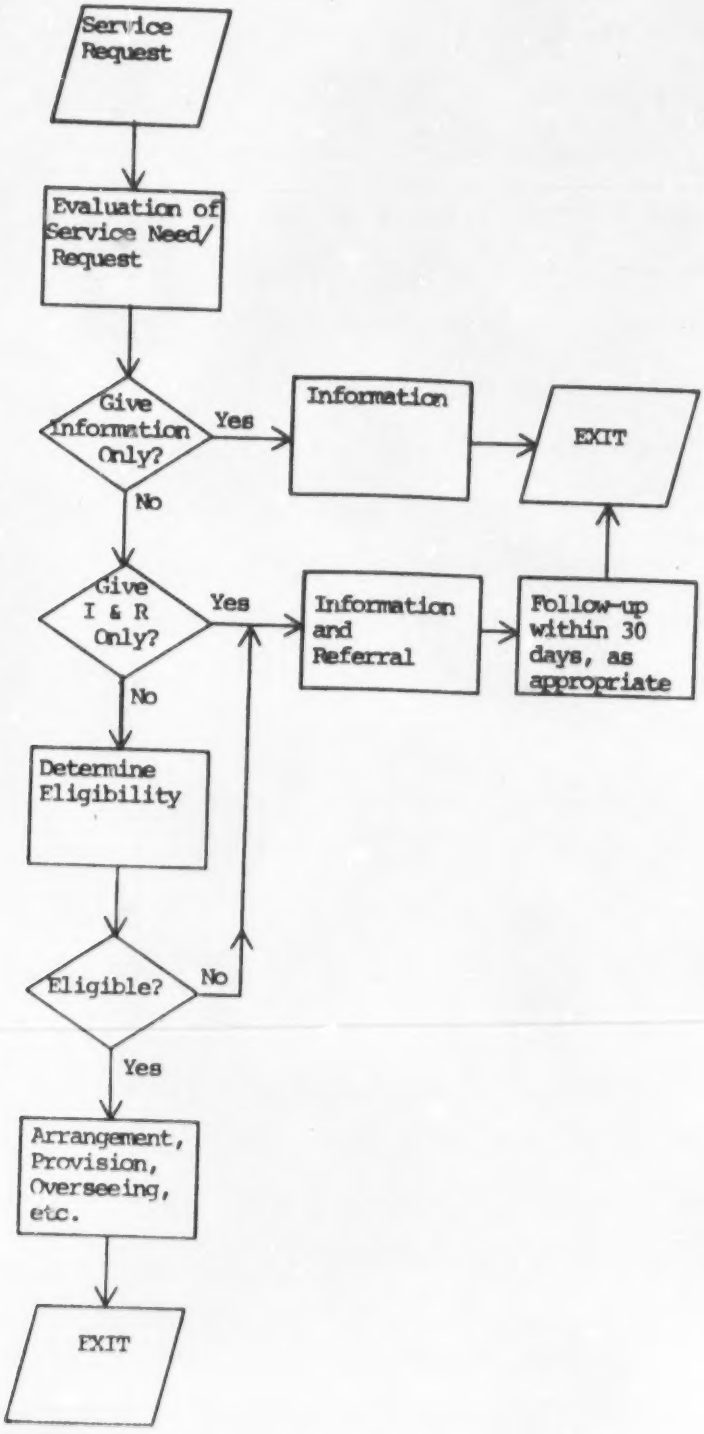
Information gathering is a rather straight-forward effort to obtain or receive the right kind of facts. The focus is on factual and pertinent information relating to client eligibility and, more importantly, problem identification. The information needed at this point does not have to be in great detail nor is this necessarily the only time information will be gathered.

An emphasis is again made on the need to listen and to be observant. The majority of clients can identify and discuss their problems. Likewise they are able to respond to service alternatives and can make choices and decisions. The activity of information gathering is reinforced by the recognition that the client is the best source of information.

The second activity requires more deliberate judgment and effort toward decision-making. In the plainest terms, assessment requires some reflection: What does the information gathered mean and how is it going to be used? What response will the agency make to the client's request or need? This

FIGURE 1

CASE MANAGEMENT
EVALUATION PROCESS:
FUNCTIONAL FLOW



kind of assessment is designed to support the decision-making that is to occur and which will be reflected in the next activity.

To some extent the assessment activity ensures that the service worker understands what the client has said, and includes clarification when needed. The activity presupposes the means through which a client can effectively state his thoughts, identify tangible problems and perhaps begin to suggest what he believes is possible. The assessment seeks to identify and determine what logically should follow, given the information provided and the results of screening.

The third activity is an effort to sort out factors which might influence case disposition. Sorting out occurs as the service worker begins to determine what the next action should be. Three alternatives seem most plausible: (1) the provision of information only, (2) the provision of information and referral and (3) the determination of eligibility.

The decision that information only will be provided is based on several points considered during this step. These include the possibilities that (a) the client is obviously not eligible for the agency's services; (b) the client appears eligible (may well be), but the service requested does not exist in the agency or the community; (c) the client appears eligible

and the service is provided by the agency but unavailable at the time; (d) the service requested is provided elsewhere and that information is provided.

As one aspect in the sorting out process, the provision of information only implies that no further activity by the worker will occur with the client. The conclusion is that the client and the worker are in agreement and that this decision reflects the client's situation as expressed and evaluated.

The second option in the sorting out process is the provision of information and referral. The implication is that a joint decision is reached and that both the client and the worker will have further involvement and activity. The additional activity suggests the extension of a concept mentioned earlier, client channeling. Direct help is provided to the client in order for the client to have access elsewhere. This option may include such possibilities as providing general information, giving advice, some degree of counseling, specific referral and follow-up.

Once again the emphasis is made that (a) information and referral is a distinctive service provided as the result of client and worker interaction; and (b) this service is based on the client's request or need, along with an assessment of information gathered.

The third option in this process is eligibility determination. If this option is chosen, it suggests that the activities up to this point have gravitated toward the full case management process, including the probable identification of a primary client. The decision to move into the determination of eligibility requires further involvement of the client and the worker. It again implies that both have reached a consensus, and particularly that the client wishes to move further into the process. It may also imply that available information indicates that (1) the client may be eligible and (2) the next activities or steps need to occur within a reasonable, if not an immediate, timeframe.

C. Content

The content of the evaluation of the service request or need deals with a variety of factors that assures the client and the worker that the decisions made are reasonable ones, given the circumstances. Content in this sense means the information that is gathered, discussed and assessed as well as some of the beginning elements of a service plan. The content includes: assessment of the current situation; problem identification; objectives and goal; availability of tangible service/resources; and the time element.

In the first step of the case management process, it is neither necessary nor recommended that extensive and in-depth

analysis or excessive time be characteristics of the activity. The factors mentioned in this step's content are distributed throughout case management. Those factors (e.g., current situation, goal, objective) will be reconsidered over and over and with increased intensity as case managed service delivery begins.

The emphasis is on assessing the client's current situation. What is happening today? The evaluation occurring here is not a psycho-social examination of the client's functioning. Rather, the assessment of the client's current situation should be influenced by an emphasis on concrete services and meeting specific needs.

Almost as important as assessing the client's current situation is the requirement to assess and to be aware of the agency's current situation. If the agency cannot provide or cannot arrange, refer, procure, etc. the service, the client should be advised accordingly. The case management process will have little impact if it results in an open case with nothing being done. From a client's point of view, nothing could be more irrelevant; from a worker's standpoint, nothing could be more useless. The decision to move beyond step one and to make the commitment to the thorough management of a client's case is motivated by the knowledge that services are available.

Problem identification has been mentioned earlier, particularly in the screening nature of evaluating the service request or need. The content should simply reflect what has occurred during this step. By-and-large, problems should be characterized as: observable; tangible in nature; within the purview of the agency's responsibility; mindful of environmental stresses; and consistent with objectives to be defined and the goal to be established.

The evaluation step requires that an effort commence to define or identify objectives and to establish a goal. Case management requires that both of these elements evolve out of a client-worker consensus, with heavy reliance on the client's agreement. At this point it is not necessary to finalize objectives or a goal. It is, however, a requirement to have a preliminary concept of the appropriate objectives and, once identified, what a likely goal should be. The determination of what seems feasible and what can be achieved are logical considerations in this step, again promoting the involvement and agreement of the client.

Once the above content steps have occurred, it is possible to make some determination of probable services and potential resources. The identification of services or resources needs to be specific. It must also reflect the more tangible aspects of problem identification and objectives.

If the problems identified are of the kind typically recognized, the services and resources required are likely to be concrete and practical. A key component in the identification of services is the linkage of the client to resources not previously available to him.

Finally, the content of this step should reflect a consideration of the time element required to produce an effective outcome. In simplest terms, does the screening, information gathering, assessment and sorting out suggest immediate resolution or long range involvement? Though it may be more tentative than permanent, the evaluation step should provide a clearly designated timeframe for accomplishing objectives. It should answer the question "How long will it take to achieve the desired outcome?" Obviously, a great deal of judgment is required, coupled with the knowledge that efficiency is but one desirable aspect of the service delivery system.

In summary, when the evaluation of the service request or need has moved to the alternative of eligibility determination, four simple questions should be answerable:

1. Does it appear that this client is eligible for service through this agency?
2. What are the specific problems identified?
3. Are there services or resources available in relation to the problems identified?
4. What results can be predicted because of agency involvement, particularly in terms of objective and/or goal achievements?

CHAPTER II

Eligibility Determination

A. Purpose

Eligibility determination is a necessary step in the case management process, more because of the requirements of social services legislation than as an integral part of case management. However, its significance as a management function should not be ignored, particularly as it reinforces and gives emphasis to decision-making. Thus, it is an early step in the process and underscores the previously mentioned time element. If a client is not eligible, that fact needs to be established early in order to consider alternatives, if any.

The purpose of eligibility determination is self evident. This function is to assure that eligible clients receive approved services in order to achieve identified goals. The elements of approved services, eligible clients and identified goals are prescribed by virtue of federal legislation and regulations and the state's service plan. The operating principle is that the service agency develops its program in order to utilize federal funds appropriately. Given this mandate, both the need for and the purpose of, eligibility determination is apparent.

B. Process

The process involved in determining eligibility is very similar to the earlier discussion of the evaluation of the

service request/need. The activities of information gathering and assessment are virtually the same for this step. The focus simply has narrowed to the very specific criteria to be met and the information required to determine if they are met. Again, the emphasis is on the client as a primary source of information, at least in the initial stages.

C. Content

The content in eligibility determination is already prescribed primarily by Title XX of the Social Security Act, along with the supporting regulations and material. The content is not provided in detail here and reference should be made to appropriate resources for policies and procedures relative to eligibility determination. The content in this step will basically reflect the following activities: obtain pertinent information; complete the necessary forms; advise the client of his/her rights and obligations; and finally make the decision or determination as to the client's eligibility.

If the client is eligible and the decision is made to continue the involvement with the service agency, a primary client has been identified. At this point case management and its process move the client and the worker to the next step: Planning.

CHAPTER III

Planning

A. Purpose

The purpose of planning is to develop and maintain a case plan. This process involves (a) the identification and assessment of client problems (b) establishing viable objectives and (c) service identification.

In terms of the overall case management process, planning should result in a statement that over time will clarify expectations about a client and the services provided. Depending on individual circumstances, short and long range priorities are involved, obviously. In the same way, contingency is typical of the planning process, especially in long-run situations.

In all these respects, planning must be viewed in relation to all other case management objectives and activities. In this view, it both reflects and prompts case actions.

In summary, from the standpoint of case management, the planning process:

- involves the client;
- is a continuing responsibility, possible involving a number of service providers and other interests; and
- results in a plan that incorporates objectives, milestones and other management considerations.

B. Process and Content

The planning process involves three operations or activities: (1) problem definition, (2) establishing objectives and (3) the identification of services. These are subsets of planning and will be examined in terms of their particular purposes, process and content. The content of planning is inherent in the process and reflects the information particularly specified in identification of objectives and services.

1. Problem Definition: The purpose of defining the problem is to pinpoint the area of need. The idea is that by methodically dissecting the problem and its possible source, those actions which can be most effective in dealing with it are brought into a sharpened focus.

The problem may be one of some unmet need--economic, medical, educational, recreational--which hampers or undermines a person's livelihood. Or it may be one of stress--psychological, social, physical--which causes the person to be ineffective or disturbed in his social roles. Such needs and stress may occur singly or in combination. In order to pinpoint the factors that underlie the problem, it is important to (1) determine the facts pertaining to the problem, (2) understand the causal determinants of the problem, (3) ascertain client efforts to deal with it, and (4) clarify inhibitions which may affect attempts to grasp and explain the problem.

Fact Finding: A fact according to the dictionary, is "any event, mental or physical; an occurrence, quality, or relation, the reality of which is manifest in experience or may be inferred with certainty." The facts to be ascertained in defining the problem include "objective reality," (which is to say the ones that most persons in a given society would perceive or experience as existent or "true"), and "subjective reality" (which is the particular way something is experienced by a particular person). Facts are events, qualities, relationships, situations, reactions and behaviors that may be established by observation, documentation, and inference. They are accounts of the problem as it actually appears to the worker, and they are both seen and felt by the client. They include (a) circumstances, (b) the client's feelings and behavior responses to them and (c) the means and goals sought. They are the summary of "what brought this about," of what a person means, of what a person may want to happen. They give a problem its tangible, specific form, so that "help" and "solution" may be focused and appropriate.

Causal Determinants: Whatever the basic causes of client difficulty may be, the factors which should be identified and understood are those which contribute directly to the problem. The causes that should be in the front line of concern are those operating to create or complicate the current problem.

What brought this about? When did this start? Why do you suppose it happened? How did it get to be this way?

Prior Efforts: It is important to ascertain what efforts were made to solve the problem before it was brought to the agency. This is important because what the client has or has not done will provide clues about his ability to deal with problems in the future. The following questions may serve as a guide for securing this information.

- What has the client thought to do, or actually tried to do, himself or with the help of others, to work at the problem?
- What are his ideas about possible solutions?
- What has been the client's behavior responses to the problem?
- What personal resources does he have? Are any other resources available to the client?

Identifying Gaps in the Explanation of the Problem: Two meanings are possible when we speak of identifying gaps in the explanation of a problem: In the first place, it refers to enabling the client to put his/her problems into words. Second, it signifies a need to aid the client in clarifying his perception so that his efforts to cope with his problems will be more appropriate. Obviously, except for standard interview techniques, there are no fail-safe methods for achieving this level of communication. The point is to emphasize the need to make this kind of concern a part of problem definition.

2. Establish Objectives: The purpose of establishing objectives is to provide a definite frame of reference for the client so that an orderly, systematic strategy or plan for problem resolution can be devised.

As a second aspect of planning, the establishment of objectives grows out of and interweaves with the ongoing definition of the problem. As such, it is thinking through the facts which have been agreed on. This means that the search is for (a) an understanding of the problem and its makeup, (b) an understanding of how the person's actions and reactions affect it, and (c) an appreciation of the different meanings that may be imputed, and the varying significance this may have in terms of a client's reactions to the problem. Efforts should be concentrated to help the client sort out the problem and view it in its separate and (possibly) more manageable parts. In part, this means helping the client to select from the massed pressures he feels those elements which are most important and to cast aside others, thereby moving toward some organized and economical approach to coping with his trouble. The criteria suggested for doing this are:

- Immediate Aspects--These are elements of the problem(s) which are manifestly and directly before the worker and client.
- Remote Aspects--These are dimensions of the problem(s) which are intimately related to the larger problem, but which can be deferred for the time being without further deteriorating the client's situation.

- Manageability--This identifies the self-help aspects of a problem which the client, despite fears and defenses, can be expected to handle and cope with.

The setting of objectives is perhaps the most critical aspect of planning. Without it, any subsequent activity has little meaning. Objectives form the basis for determining what activities should be performed to help the client. Importantly, they also represent the criteria for determining how well they are being performed. Therefore, the setting of objectives is one of the keys to effective service delivery.

There are two aspects to the task of setting objectives: (1) identifying the objectives (which includes assignment of priorities) and (2) writing the objectives in a form that will make them effective service delivery tools.

Identify Objectives: What is an objective? In its simplest formulation an objective is a statement of results to be achieved.

Anything can be objectivized, from eliminating the national debt to washing a pane of window glass. In this regard, the worker himself must decide what work activities should be put into objective form. To be effective, the objectives should reflect the worker's service delivery expectations. Put succinctly, an objective should describe in the simplest terminology possible the results the worker expects to achieve with the client.

How to Determine Objectives: There are as many methods of determining objectives as there are case managers who will set them. Thus the method used by the case manager is a matter of personal choice. Regardless of choice, the result should be a list of objectives that will describe what the case manager and his agency or allied services expect to accomplish with the client (and hence what they can be evaluated against).

The simplest and most logical approach to determining objectives is derived from the immediate aspects of the problem, remote aspects of the problem, and manageability of the problem. In this case manageability refers to the tasks that the client, despite fears and defenses, can be expected to handle and cope with at a given point. These considerations should play a major role in determining and prioritizing objectives.

The methods of determining objectives are not intended to provide rigid prescriptions for determining objectives. If using them will aid the case manager in more effectively determining what his objectives should be, then they will have served their purpose. Regardless of the approach used, the end result should be a list of objectives covering the case manager's planned accomplishments with the client. A list of valid objectives is what is important, not the means by which they are determined.

Guidelines for Writing Objectives: The following ground rules will aid in the formulation of objectives. While a given objective may not necessarily conform to all of these criteria, it should be checked against them anyway.

1. The statement of objective should begin with the word "to" followed by an action verb. The achievement of an objective must come as a result of action of some sort. Therefore, the commitment to action is basic to the formulation of an objective.

2. The objective should specify a single key result to be accomplished. In order for an objective to be effectively measured, there must be a clear picture of when it has or has not been achieved.

3. The objective should specify a target-date for its accomplishment. It's fairly obvious that to be measurable an objective must include a specific completion date, either stated or implied. If the objective is of a continuing nature, the target date could be assumed to be the end of the eligibility period. A situation of this nature may occur when services are being provided to a client whose situation is such that prospects for ever getting better seem very slim.

4. An objective should specify the "what" and "when"; it should avoid venturing into the "why" and "how." Once again, an objective is a statement of "results to be achieved." The "why bridge" should have been crossed before the actual writing of the objective has started.

   The means of achieving an objective should not be included in the objective statement. The "how" is covered under the next step in the outline: Service Identification.

5. Objectives should be realistic and attainable, but still represent a significant challenge. Since an objective can and should serve as a strong motivational tool for the individual worker and the client, it must be one that is within reach. This simply means that resources must be available to achieve the objective.

6. Objectives should be recorded in writing. Each of us, whether consciously or unconsciously, has a convenient "memory." We tend to remember the things that turn out the way we want them to and either forget or modify those things that are less than we wish. If objectives were not put in writing, it would be relatively easy to look on accomplishments as if they were in fact planned objectives. On the other side of the coin, one of the sharpest areas of conflict between worker, client and supervisor is illustrated by such phrases as "I thought you were working on something else!" or "That's not what we agreed to do." Or "You didn't tell me that's what you expected." Having objectives in writing will not eliminate all of these problems, but it will provide something more tangible for comparison. Furthermore, it serves as a constant reminder and an effective tracking device for the worker, the client and the supervisor to measure progress.

7. A statement of objective must be consistent with the resources available or anticipated.

8. Ideally, an objective should avoid or minimize dual accountability for achievement when joint effort is required.

9. Objectives must be consistent with basic agency policies and practices.

10. Objectives must be willingly agreed to by the client without undue pressure or coercion.

11. The setting of an objective must be communicated not only in writing, but also in face-to-face discussions with the client and the resource persons or agencies contributing to its attainment.

Key Questions for Evaluating Objectives: Some questions dealing with the key elements of these propositions can be developed. They can be used in a shorthand way as a checklist in formulating objectives.

1. Is the objective statement constructed properly? Action verb + Single key result + Target date.

2. Does its achievement relate clearly to the case manager's and the client's responsibilities?

3. Can it be understood by those who will play a role in its implementation?

4. Is the objective realistic and attainable? Does it represent a significant challenge to the client and the case manager?

5. Will the result, when achieved, justify the expenditure of time and resources required to achieve it?

6. Is the objective consistent with basic agency policies and practices?

7. Can the accountability for final results be clearly established? If not, why not?

Goal Assignment: This operation involves looking over the objectives established with the client and making a determination as to which of the Title XX goals seem to relate most appropriately. While it is directly implicated in the case management process, the goal assignment operation is a Federal/State service delivery requirement.

3. Service Identification: Once the objective and the goal have been established the next step is to identify agency, community and other available services which can impact on the objectives that have been established for the client. Obviously, some practical considerations and restrictions on service availability (e.g., location, quality, etc.) must be taken into account.

The activities and tasks associated with this operation are fairly self-evident. At the risk of emphasizing the obvious, it is important that as a means for facilitating service identification the worker maintain a systematic, up-to-date listing or catalog of the variety, extent, quality, location and characteristics of services in a given area. As an added dimension and for ease of reference, services should be classified as to whether they are provided by the agency itself, by way of contract or purchase, or by other means. Ideally, also, the service inventory/directory will be updated as to client reactions and/or past agency performance.

For a variety of obvious reasons, the need for some kind of systematic service inventory to support client/service identification is most pressing in areas of sizeable service activity and demand. As a means for meeting the planning/service identification requirements of the case management process, however, it is not farfetched to urge the adoption of some form of service directory or reference, either on an individual worker or an agency-wide basis.

CHAPTER IV

Arrangement

A. Purpose and Process

The primary aim of this operation is to connect clients and identified resources so that services can begin. The arrangement process involves all the activities and procedures necessary for initiating a service, but not the service itself. In particular, it represents all those technicalities, contacts and "legwork" that must take place prior to service.

The extent and complexity of the procedures and the "legwork" implicated in the process will vary, of course, depending on the type and number of services involved, size of the service agency, and other factors.

The essential point to be made is that because the rules and regulations governing access to services are often so formidable, the client needs help. In the view of the case management process it is the job of the case manager to assure access. In good part this means that a case manager must be thoroughly acquainted with the restrictions, requirements, and qualities associated with the various service opportunities in an area. It also means that contacts with these service providers must be made beforehand and that practical means for follow-up must be agreed on.

In effect, arrangement means that case managers are obliged to take on the function of broker or go-between in behalf of clients. Depending on the overall job assignment of individual workers, this client-proxy role may be in addition to that of service provider.

B. Content

Whatever shape the arrangement process may take, whether it is on an individual worker or agency-wide basis, there are two conditions that are basic to the arrangement/referral process:

1. Intra-office Referral: This approach covers services that can be assured to clients because they are available within the worker's/case manager's own organization or its authority. This may include services provided by the agency, or contracted from an outside source. Arrangements or referrals of this kind can ussually be done through established internal procedures.

2. Inter-office Referrals: The arrangement process involves activities and procedures that will connect clients to outside agencies, without a definite assurance that the service will be delivered. Because referrals of this kind are not within the organizational or authority domain of your agency, procedures and decision rules over which you have little or no influence may be involved.

Due to a number of organizational factors (e.g., degree of service specialization within an agency, extent to which services are integrated, etc.), these distinctions may vary. Once these types of conditions have been identified they will be useful in charting the work, responsibilities and roles needed to arrange services for and in behalf of clients.

CHAPTER V

Service Provision

While the provision of services is part of the case mangement process, it is distinguished by the rules and regulations that govern the variety of services which can be given to clients by public and private agencies. Consequently, the procedures, activities and tasks associated with this requirement are directly determined by Federal, State and local policies and procedures. Technically service operations can take place independent of the case management process.

Even though the service provision requirement is subject to determinants outside the case management process, with few exceptions (e.g., protection) the provision of services is not an end in itself. Service is the highest, but not the only system priority. Two propositions underscore this point of view:

- Case management requires client involvement in the service delivery system in more ways than simply as a service recipient. Clients (i.e., chiefly primary clients) participate in defining problems, making plans and decisions, and in assessing results.

  The presumed effect of this approach is that services can be given in the context of objectives that are closer to the mark and in accordance with a plan that is more realistic than if clients were not directly involved.

- The provision of any service carries with it the full weight and implication of the entire delivery system--local, state, etc. Services are not, therefore, qualitatively good or bad unless all system factors are under control, or at least accountable and/or knowable. By system factors we mean other workers, other service providers (public or private), service resources in their various forms, and all other aspects of organization, including regulations and policies.

  In spite of efforts to the organize services on a district basis, and notwithstanding the human resource approach to services at the State level, service delivery often means that two or more agency staff are involved. Accordingly, the quality and adequacy of the services that are given to a client may well depend on the extent to which agency staff (public, private or whatever) can coordinate and work together. The case management model specifies requirements for this coordinative, centralizing role.

In sum, while services can be separately defined (by Title XX regulations, for example) and operated, their results depend finally on how they are managed and controlled. In case management terms, services are managed by following a series of steps and requirements. These steps and requirements are stated in general terms as opposed to the kind of detailed routine that can hamper and entangle workers in their service mission.

The resultant pattern of client and system (i.e., service providers/workers, case managers, etc.) interaction means that some staff will assume multiple agency roles. That is, a worker may:

- be a service specialist, with case management responsibility placed elsewhere; or
- be responsible for serving one or more clients, while sharing case management obligations with other service providers and/or case managers; or
- be part of a case management team.

Roles will be defined, of course, by organizational factors such as agency size and the extent of staff specialization. Other factors having to do with the service involvement of "outside" agencies will also apply. In such instances, programmatic and professional differences may be involved, in addition to organizational separateness. For a variety of fairly evident reasons, the resolution of such differences, along with carrying out basic case management procedures, probably will tend toward a team approach.

These ideas about service provision and its place in the case management process are meant to emphasize the importance of making realistic connections between clients and the so-called service delivery system. In the main, this simply means that those who are responsible for the day-to-day management and delivery of services recognize the problems and shortcomings of their system and are prepared to cope. The case management process is a way of coping.

CHAPTER VI

Overseeing

Up to this point, the entire case management process has focused on managing the establishment of a case. Overseeing is the term used to characterize the process of managing the already established cases. In other words, case management includes two fundamental processes, which might be called "start-up" and "on-going." The first five steps of the case management model described previously comprise the start-up portion. Overseeing signifies the "on-going" portion. Of course, once a case is established, planning and service arrangement/provision also fall within this on-going/overseeing category.

The purpose of overseeing is very simply to produce informed decisions on what must be done next. In order to accomplish this decision-making purpose, it is basically cyclical in operation. As a result, once overseeing (i.e., the monitoring-assessment cycle) commences it may be implicated in the overall process in nearly any imaginable combination.

The purpose assumes knowledge of three critical things:

1. Where the client was at start-up (i.e., his/her abilities and limitations re: the problem identified, etc.);

2. Where the client needs to be when problem is resolved; and

3. Where the client is right now.

Obviously, in order to know these things, the plan (Step 3) must have been clearly developed, and the record (Step 7) must show the assessment of where the client was and where the client and worker are aiming to go, as well as how they are planning to go. Additionally, in order to oversee properly, you must observe where the client is now. To do this, you must have observed what has happened to the client, monitoring his/her progress or development as service is delivered, etc. This can usually be accomplished by observation of and discussion with the client and each service provider involved in the case. In this sense, monitoring represents a consistent effort to find out:

1. Was the client situation actually as you recorded (during planning/evaluation of need)?

2. What services have been received?

3. What conditions have changed since planning? Since service began?

The purpose of monitoring is simply to know, whereas the purpose of the next procedure, assessing, is to place this knowledge in the context of those circumstances that appear to most affect the client. For instance, if monitoring indicates that the client's situation is not as described initially, or that the case objectives are in error or that an objective

has been achieved, some kind of adjustment obviously is in order. Equally obvious, the kind of adjustment to be made will depend on the apparent difference between what was observed during monitoring and what significance there is to planned objectives. This routine of weighing monitoring observations in context also will help to dampen tendencies to overreact. Case planning and other errors detected through monitoring should not automatically dictate the scrapping of previous work.

Unfortunately, there is no ready prescription for learning how to assess correctly--trial and error methods are probably the most useful, if not the most reliable.

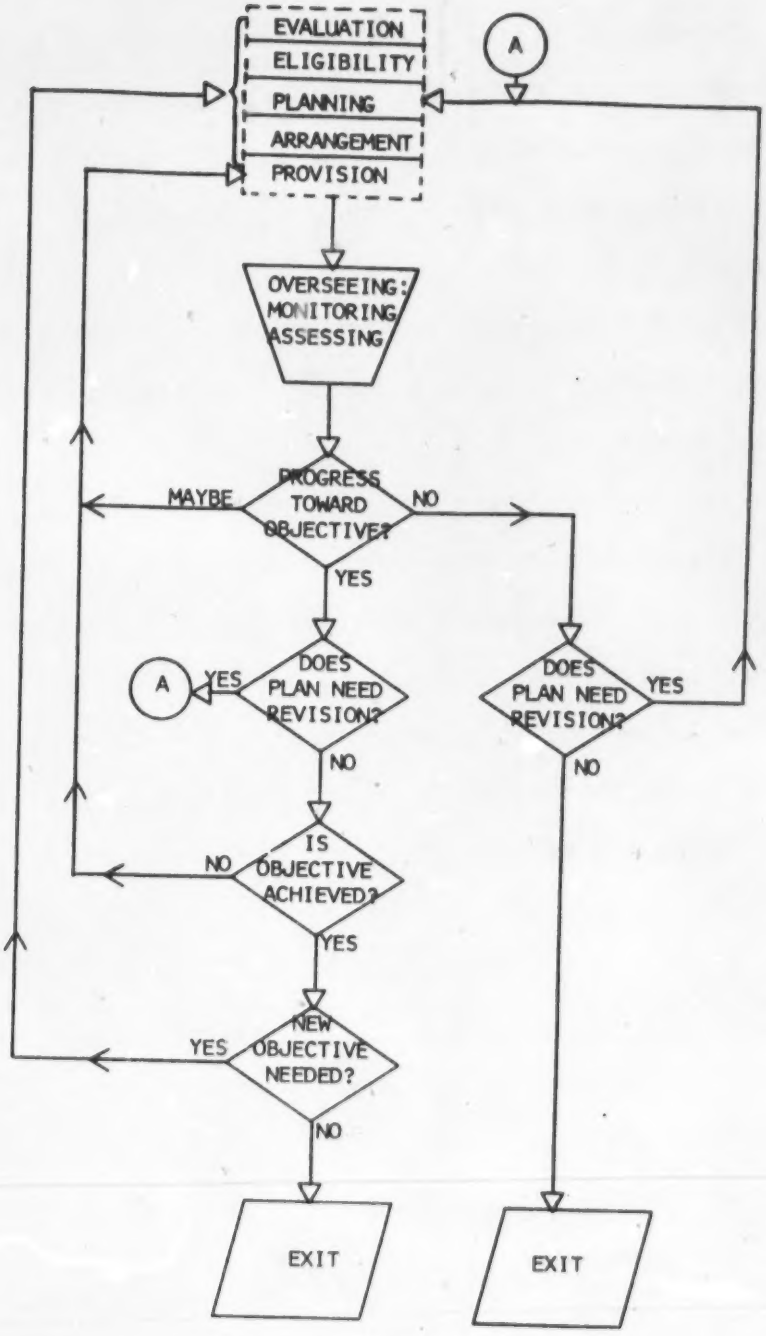
There are innumerable possible decisions that might need to be made in any given case at some point in time, but there are three decision-points that recur in every case:

1. Is progress toward the objective being made?
2. Should the plan be altered?
3. Should the case be closed?

Regardless of the particulars, these questions ought to be considered throughout the overseeing process. A chart depicting the outcomes of each of these follows (Figure 2). It will help guide the decision making at these three key points and it serves as emphasis on the main purpose of overseeing: What should be done next?

OVERSEEING DECISION FLOW

FIGURE 2



In summary, then, overseeing may require re-planning, re-evaluation of service need, re-arrangement, re-determination of eligibility, more service delivery, or any combination of the above, or any part of any of those steps. Observing and talking with those involved in the process of helping the client, along with other ways of gathering the relevant factors needed to determine what ought to happen next, are basic to the process. As such they are basic to deciding whether to (a) keep on as is, (b) make changes or (c) close the case.

CHAPTER VII

Recording

Purpose

Each step of the case management model involves an activity that requires thinking as well as doing. This is especially true of the last step. The purpose of recording is fourfold:

1. to keep systematic records of activity;
2. to maintain legal documentation;
3. to aid in each step of case management;
4. to aid in developing more competent case managers.

This purpose cannot be achieved by merely writing down what has happened. To really record all that transpires in a case would no doubt take time equal to that spent actually helping the client. This would be a waste of human resources, and yet it is imperative that the data be present that are required to remind or inform the worker and supervisor what has happened, why it probably happened, and what is to happen next. Not only must these facts and inferences be present, they must be readily retrievable. If it takes too long (too much reading, etc.) to find those data, no one will look for them. This means either "re-inventing the wheel"--re-evaluation of need, planning, etc.--or "faking it"--doing something with or for the client, without regard to need, plans, etc.

Either of these alternatives is as great a waste of human resources as the former waste (writing down everything), but additionally may waste the limited dollars available to social services.

Therefore, an efficient way of recording must be established, with efficiency measured in two dimensions: a) recording time, and b) recording usefulness. Minimizing time at the expense of losing utility loses effectiveness; maximizing utility by inflating time is inefficient, however; therefore, the objective is to determine the "diminishing return" point of utility, and to implement a strategy to streamline the recording process in order to minimize time invested, thereby optimizing the effectiveness.

Process

To be systematic, this step is required subsequent to every other step in the process. To be most efficient, it should take place immediately after concluding one or more consecutive steps in the case management process. Therefore the first activity is simply to reflect on what has just taken place. The case management model can provide a useful perspective. For instance, during the process activities (planning, arranging and beginning service delivery) reflect back on the problem jointly identified with the client.

Recall how this problem was defined (the client's current condition is intimately confounded with the problem of definition). Then, write it down. Reflect back on what was jointly concluded to be the appropriate solution to the problem. Describe the client at that point. Write it down. What strategy, or general approach, is being deployed to solve the problem, or achieve the objective? What reasons make this particular approach best? Write it down--that is important. What service(s) are to be arranged? Write it down, along with beginning time, provider name and any other related factors. What is the client going to do? Write it down.

The point of all of this is to think, first; then write. Synthesize the observations. Relate them meaningfully to the client's situation. Then write. Do not write before then. Do not do anything else before then.

While this step-by-step approach to recording may seem unduly rudimentary, even naive, it is no less desirable. It is desirable because it emphasizes the need for timely recording of what has been done or decided in terms that have direct bearing on the client. This reasoning supposes that when the stepwise routine is not followed there is a chance that a vital piece of information or a connection may be omitted. In turn, this will impair the case manager's ability to determine on an informed basis what needs to happen next.

Finally, while recording should not and cannot dominate the case management process, it must be structured and routinized to be effective. Given the dynamics of service delivery at the individual case level (e.g., staff turnover, case transfers, service coordination requirements), the importance of recording is such that a case manager's success in handling cases is as dependent on recording competency as on counseling skill.

Content

As both a document and decision-making aid, the case management record comprises a variety of what can be called process and case elements. In line with the desirability of a step-by-step recording procedure, the content can be organized into a number of designated record categories. The following terms can be used (e.g., in the margin of the record) as identifiers:

Need
Eligibility
Problem
Objective
Service Plan
Arrangements
Provision

Note that overseeing is not on the list. This is because overseeing has no new activities. As described previously, it is essentially a monitoring-assessment cycle. Its chief characteristic is that it begins an iteration process, and

therefore must be based on what has taken place previously, to be appropriate.

In keeping with case management process requirements (i.e., a time-based perspective), record contents should be reviewed and summarized periodically (e.g., every six months). This effort requires a review and synthesis of all data collected on all components of need, eligibility, problem definition, objective setting, service plan, arrangements and provision. Purging the record of outdated and cumbersome data should also be routine.

It is useful if not necessary, to formulate other record-keeping rules. However, aside from the minimums described so far, these rules are best devised on the basis of experience and on the basis of agency requirements.